

Preliminary Course Outline

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**Carleton University
Fall 2018
Department of English**

ENGL 3902A: Screenwriting Workshop

**Wednesday, 11:35-2:25
Location: TBA on Carleton Central**

**Instructor: Nadia Bozak
Email: nadia.bozak@carleton.ca
Office: Dunton Tower, 1918
Phone: 613-520-2600 x 2330
Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:00-11:00**

Course Description:

This creative writing workshop is an introduction to writing for screens; thus, no previous screenwriting experience is required though knowledge of how storytelling works will be an asset. While reading and analyzing exemplary screenplays and writing their own short scripts, students will acquire such tools as: writing effective dialogue, creating dramatic scenes, and characterization; introducing, sustaining and resolving conflict; writing while using applicable formatting software. Importantly, students will learn to critique, discuss, and improve their screenplays as well as those of their peers through the workshop experience.

Over the course of the term, students will:

- Read, critically analyze, and discuss assigned scripts
- Watch, critically analyze, and discuss assigned films (in relation to the scripts)
- Learn to edit and revise their own work, and that of their peers
- Write a number of targeted exercises to help students generate ideas and become acquainted with screenwriting formatting and its applicable software
- Write a short screenplay of 10-12 pages

Portfolio Guidelines:

- **Please read carefully!**
- Email a 10-12 page sample of your screenwriting or creative writing (fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, etc.) to english@carleton.ca by **Monday, July 30, 2018**. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission.
- **Include your name, student number, and Carleton email address.**
- This sample should be formatted to the best of your ability if it is a screenplay and may be an excerpt from a longer piece.
- If you wish, you can include samples from more than one piece of writing, but please remain within the page limits.
- Include a few lines of context or “bridging” information if the piece is an excerpt (so that I can easily understand at which point I am joining the action, etc).
- Include a brief biographical statement answering such questions as: Do you have any background in creative writing, screenwriting, or other forms of writing? Have you ever taken a creative writing or screenwriting workshop? If so, when and what was the workshop? What is your major and/or minor? Why do you want to take this workshop and what do you hope to gain from it? This statement should be about 250 words (one double-space typed page).
- I will evaluate the portfolios and contact students by **Monday, August 7, 2018**, advising whether or not they have been selected. As there is no guarantee students will be admitted, it is recommended that students choose an alternate course.
- Once I have a list of those who will be admitted into the workshop, the administration in the Department of English will send you an email telling you a spot has been opened up for you. At this time you can go ahead and register.
- Please email me any questions you may have.

Course Outline

Weekly Schedule

Date and Topic	Read/ Discuss	Watching	Due
<p>Week 1</p> <p>Wed Sept 5:</p> <p>Course outline; Choose workshops and presentations; discuss the short vs. the feature</p>	n/a	<i>The Karman Line</i>	n/a
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Wed Sept 12:</p> <p>Structure/Turning Points/ Plot Points/ Character</p>	<p><i>Bible:</i> 3-36; 147-165</p> <p>Presentations: 1-3</p> <p>Workshop Assignments: 1-4</p>	<i>Witness</i> <i>Russian Roulette</i>	Visual Writing Assignment due
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Wed Sept 19:</p> <p>Story-layering/ Plot/ Genre/ Character/ Theme</p>	<p><i>Bible:</i> 36-82; 185-207</p> <p>Presentations: 4-6</p> <p>Workshop Assignments: 5-8</p>	<i>The Fly</i>	Character Assignment due
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Wed Sept 26:</p> <p>Dialogue/ subtext/ exposition</p>	<p><i>Bible:</i> 82-92; 207-229</p> <p>Presentations: 7-8</p> <p>Workshop Assignments: 9-12</p>	<i>Juno</i> <i>Actor Seeks Role</i>	Dialogue Assignment due
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Wed Oct 3:</p> <p>Scenes</p>	<p><i>Bible:</i> 92-109; 165-185</p> <p>Presentations 9-10</p> <p>Workshop Assignments: 13-16</p>	<i>Whiplash</i> (Short and feature)	Dramatic Tension Assignment due
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Wed Oct 10:</p> <p>Review so far... getting started on our own scripts</p>	<p><i>Bible:</i> 113-133</p> <p>Presentations: 11-12</p> <p>Workshop Assignments: 17-20</p>	<i>La Jetée</i> <i>12 Monkeys</i>	Dream/ No Dialogue Assignment due Logline due

Week 7 Wed Oct 17:	<i>Bible: 134-143</i> Presentations: 13-14 Workshop loglines and pitches – ALL	<i>Frozen River</i>	Step outline, logline, treatment due
Reading Week	Reading Week <i>Bible: 241-303</i>	Reading Week	Reading Week First drafts due
Week 8 Wed Oct 31:	Workshop first drafts <i>Bible: 241-303</i> Presentations: 15-16 Workshop drafts: 1-3	<i>Do the Right Thing</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 9 Wed Nov 7:	<i>Bible: 241-303</i> Presentations: 17-18 Workshop drafts: 4-6	<i>Laredo, Texas</i> <i>Meshes of the Afternoon</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 10 Wed Nov 14:	Presentations: 19-20 Workshop drafts: 7-9	<i>Points of Origin</i> <i>James</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 11 Wed Nov 21:	Workshop drafts: 10-13	<i>Frozen River</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 12 Wed Nov 28:	Workshop drafts: 14-17	<i>City of God</i>	Workshop first drafts

Week 13 Wed Dec 5:	Workshop drafts: 18-20	<i>TBA</i>	Workshop first drafts

Note on the workshop dynamic:

Over the course of the term, students will work towards writing a self-contained screenplay of about 10 pages. While the first half of the term is devoted to getting familiar with the conventions of screenplay writing, the second half is all about workshopping our first drafts as a group.

Here is how it works: on the first day of class we will all sign up for a workshop dates (one date for an assignment, described below, and one date for your screenplay). One week before their appointed dates, students will post their work on CU Learn for the group to read. The rest of the class then has one week to read the posted pieces and comment upon them. On the day of the workshop, we will read through and discuss the comments together as a group.

Assignments:

1. Final, revised draft of a self-contained 10-page short-film screenplay: 40%

Logline = 5%

Step out line = 5%

Treatment = 5%

Reflection statement = 5%

Actual revised draft = 20%

The final, revised draft of your screenplay is due two weeks after it is workshopped in class. Please hand in the screenplay to me (properly formatted) the day it is due.

As revising is the foundation of all writing, the final draft must be accompanied by a 2-page “Reflection Statement,” wherein you describe the process and experience of revising your screenplay in accordance with (or in opposition to) the feedback you received during your workshop. This statement will be written in full sentences (not point form), formatted in Times New Roman 12-point font, and double-spaced.

In your Reflection Statement you might discuss such issues as: your personal reaction to being critiqued by your peers; what you decided to change in your draft and why; what you decided to preserve in your draft and why; what important lessons you learned about your screenwriting skills and what you might change about them moving forward.

2. Writing Assignments: 5 x 6% each = 30%

For the first six weeks, students will complete a weekly 2-page writing assignment. These are intended to get you warmed up, familiarizing you with screenwriting formatting and software, while also stimulating your creativity. You may develop one of these assignments into your final screenplay project.

As this is a workshop, we will take turns sharing the assignments with our peers. Because the class is so large, we will only have time to workshop one assignment per student.

During the first session, students will choose their workshop dates for this assignment.

The week before your assignment is due, you will send it to Nadia (as a properly formatted pdf) to post on CU Learn.

Your peers and I will then read your assignment for the following week. When we meet, we will discuss assignments as a group in the form of a workshop.

3. Presentation: 10%

Each student will sign up for a brief, ten-minute presentation on an assigned topic from the weekly viewing/reading. The presentation will respond directly to the presentation topic and also generate class discuss.

For the sake of time, please be brief and succinct. You do not need a PowerPoint presentation. If you wish to show a clip from a film to illustrate your point, that is fine.

Please hand in your speaking notes, written in clear, grammatically correct prose (point-form is not acceptable).

Please have two questions ready for the class. These questions should be included in the hardcopy of the presentation you turn in.

3. Participation (editorial feedback given to peers, comments and discussion in class): 20%

As this is a workshop, its success depends largely on students actively participating in group discussions, reading and commenting upon the work of your peers, and offering constructive feedback during workshop critiques. I will evaluate the effort and thought you put into all of these aspects.

*

Note on attendance: any student who misses more than three workshops without a documented reason (medical, extenuating family situation) will lose 10% of the final grade

*

Note on texting, cell phones, and/or Internet usage during class: I will confiscate your laptop or cell phone (or other distraction) for the duration of that workshop

*

Note on late assignments: I deduct 2% per day (including weekends) for late assignments.

*

A final note: You can expect to devote 7-8 hours a week to this workshop.

*

Required textbook:

David Trottier, *The Screenwriter's Bible: A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script, Sixth Edition*. Los Angeles: Silman-James, 2014.

This textbook is available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1 (at Bank, in the Glebe).

Required Software:

Celtx is a screenwriting program for Mac and PC that can be downloaded at Celtx.com

Required Viewing and Reading:

Features – all available on short term loan at the Audiovisual Resource Centre (AVRC), room 460, St. Patrick's Building

12 Monkeys. Screenplay David Peoples and Janet Peoples. Dir. Terry Gilliam. Universal, 1995. Film.

Screenplay available at: <http://scifiscripts.com/scripts/twelvemonkeys.txt>

City of God (Cidade de Deus). Screenplay by Bráulio Mantovani. Dir. Fernandes Meirelles. Miramax. 2003. Film.

Screenplay available at: <http://www.roteirodecinema.com.br/banco/cidadededeus12.pdf>
(English screenplay unavailable.)

Do the Right Thing. Screenplay by Spike Lee. Dir. Spike Lee. Universal Pictures. 1989. Film.

The Fly. Screenplay by Charles Edward Pogue and David Cronenberg. Dir. David Cronenberg. 20th Century Fox, 1986. Film

Screenplay available at: <http://goldmember.deep-ice.com/thefly1986.txt>

Frozen River. Screenplay by Courtney Hunt. Dir. Courtney Hunt. Sony Picture Classics, 2008. Film.

Screenplay available at <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Frozen-River.html>

Juno. Screenplay by Diablo Cody. Dir. Jason Reitman. Fox Searchlight Pictures. 2007. Film.

Screenplay available at: <http://screenplayexplorer.com/wp-content/scripts/juno.pdf>

Smoke Signals. Screenplay by Sherman Alexis. Dir. Chris Eyre. Miramax Films. 1998. Film.

Screenplay will be made available in the AVRC on short-term loan.

Whiplash. Screenplay by Damien Chazelle. Dir. Damien Chazelle. Sony Picture Classics. 2014. Video.

http://www.sonyclassics.com/awards-information/whiplash_screenplay.pdf

Witness. Screenplay by Earl W. Wallace and William Kelley. Dir. Peter Weir. Paramount Pictures. 1985. Film

Screenplay available at: <http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~ina22/splaylib/Screenplay-Witness.pdf>

Shorts:

Actor Seeks Roll. Screenplay by Ben Nabors. Dir. Michael Tyburski. 2015. Video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efUgTm-bRh4>

James. Screenplay by Connor Clements. Dir. Connor Clements. 2008. Video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnXvYJwC3vU>

The Karman Line. Screenplay by Dawn King. Dir Oscar Sharpe. 2013. Medium unknown.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yrdtv8QpTkY>

La Jetée. Screenplay by Chris Marker. Dir Chris Marker. 1962. Film.
<https://vimeo.com/46620661>

Laredo, Texas. Screenplay by Topaz Adizes. Dir. Topaz Adizes. 2010. Video
<http://topazadizes.com/films/laredo-texas/>

Meshes in the Afternoon. Screenplay by Maya Deren. Dir. Maya Deren and Alexander Hamid. 1943. Film.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSY0TA-ttMA>

Points of Origin. Screenplay by Anya Leta. Dir. Anya Leta. 2014. Medium?
<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2016/08/22/points-of-origin/>

Russian Roulette. Screenplay by Ben Aston. Dir. Ben Aston. 2014. Video.
<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-screening-room-russian-roulette>

Whiplash. Screenplay by Damien Chazelle. Dir. Damien Chazell. 2013. Video.
<https://vimeo.com/123482554>

Sites of interest:

New Yorker Screening Room
<http://video.newyorker.com/series/the-new-yorker-shorts>

Film School Shorts
<http://www.pbs.org/show/film-school-shorts-program/>

Short of the Week
<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/channels/canada/>

<https://vucavu.com/en/home>

Short Film Faceoff

<http://www.cbc.ca/shortfilmfaceoff/>

Digi60 Competition

<http://www.digi60.org/>

Journal of Short Film

<http://thejsf.org/>

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).